

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 4114

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ESTC, PARM, MNUC, PINT, SW
SUBJECT: SEPT 22 CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
KARIN SODER AND SEPT 23 CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY GENERAL
OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, LEIF LEIFLAND

1. ON SEPT. 22, I MET WITH FM SODER ON WHAT WAS TO BE A PURELY
PROTOCOL VISIT. AFTER BRIEF CONVERSATION SHE DISPENSED
WITH BANALITIES AND ADDRESSED HERSELF TO THE STANSAAB ISSUE
STATING BLUNTLY THAT THE DEAL WAS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE
TO SWEDEN, BOTH FINANCIALLY AND POLITICALLY. I ASSURED HER
THAT I WAS WELL AWARE OF SWEDISH CONCERNS AND THAT I HAD
PERSONALLY HELPED PUSH THE PACE OF DISCUSSIONS ALONG AND A
DECISION WOULD BE FORTHCOMING SOON. BUT CLEARLY SHE WAS
EXERCISED BY THE ISSUE. WE PARTED AMICABLY BUT I WAS GIVEN TO
UNDERSTAND BY BOTH OUR OWN PEOPLE AS WELL AS SWEDISH OFFICIALS
THAT USING A PROTOCOL VISIT TO TALK SUBSTANTIVELY UNDERSCORED
HER GOVERNMENT'S CONCERNS.

2. ON SEPT. 22, THE LEIFLAND'S HAD MY WIFE AND MYSELF OVER
FOR AN INFORMAL, SOCIAL DINNER. AFTER DINNER LEIFLAND QUOTED
TO ME A MEMO FROM SODER TO HIMSELF. IN IT SHE INSTRUCTED
HIM TO DISCUSS DIRECTLY WITH ME AT THIS PRIVATE DINNER
THE ISSUES OF THE NEUTRON BOMB, STANSAAB, AND RELEASE OF
CERTAIN OF THE PENTAGON PAPERS DUE TO THE HALPRIN CASE,
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ALTHOUGH THIS LATTER SUBJECT HAD A LOW PRIORITY.

3. NEUTRON BOMB: SODER FELT THAT SHE COULD NOT HAVE
"WARNED" OR "CONSULTED" WITH US FIRST ABOUT HER REMARKS
CRITIZING OUR PROGRAM BECAUSE OF THE GO' UNIQUE NON-
ALIGNMENT POLICY PLUS THE ADDED COMPLICATIONS OF
DOMESTIC POLITICS. IF WORD HAD LEAKED OUT ABOUT A PRIOR

CONSULTATION BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS WOULD HAVE ARISEN. THE NEUTRON BOMB WILL BE DEBATED BOTH IN THE UNGA AND THE SWEDISH RIKSTAG WHICH CONVENES OCT. 4. BOTH SODER AND LEIFLAND SAID THAT THEY BELIEVED WE HERE IN THE EMBASSY ARE SOPHISTICATED ENOUGH TO REALIZE THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL COMPLEXITIES AND PRESSURES CURRENTLY AFOOT COMBINED WITH THE GENUINE FEAR OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION ACCOUNTED FOR HER STATEMENT. SODER AND LEIFLAND SAID THERE MAY HAVE TO BE SOMEWHAT SIMILAR REMARKS FORTHCOMING. SO WE HAD BEST BE PREPARED.

4. DOMESTIC POLITICS AND THE NEUTRON BOMB: THE GOS IS TRYING TO DAMPEN RHETORIC ABOUT THE NEUTRON BOMB BUT IS INCREASINGLY PRESSURED BY THE SAP AND ESPECIALLY OLOF PALME AS BEING BITTER THESE DAYS WHILE OUT OF OFFICE AND SEARCHING FOR ISSUES. A 50 POINT ECONOMIC PROGRAM HE UNVEILED RECENTLY STRUCK NO SPARKS. LEIFLAND DID NOT COMMENT MUCH BEYOND THAT ASSESSMENT OF PALME BUT I CLEARLY SENSED THE IMPLICATINON THAT IN HIS VIEW PALME'S FRUSTRATIONS AND BITTERNESS ARE LEADING TO THE CREATION OF AN ATMOSPHERE OF GREATER POLITICAL TENSION HEATED BY INCREASING AMOUNTS OF INFLAMMATORY RHETORIC. LEIFLAND AND SODER BOTH DEPLORE THE ATTEMPT TO USE FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES FOR DOMESTIC GAIN. BUT LEIFLAND INDICATED IT WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO KEEP IT FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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ENTERING THAT ARENA. IN MY OPINION BOTH THE USG AND THE GOS MAY EXPECT REAL TROUBLE ON THE ISSUE OF THE NEUTRON BOMB AND NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IN THIS COUNTRY.

5. STANSAAB: THERE IS A CORRELATION BETWEEN SODER'S POLITICAL PROBLEMS WITH THE NUCLEAR ISSUE AND STANSAAB. THE JUNE 29-30 CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN SODER AND THE SECRETARY RECEIVED WIDE PUBLICITY IN SWEDEN. AS WE ALL KNOW THE SWEDES CAME AWAY BELIEVING THAT THEY HAD A COMMITMENT ON STANSAAB. SODER AND LEIFLAND REALIZE THAT THE SECRETARY ACTED IN GOOD FAITH AT THAT TIME AND THEY ARE APPRECIATIVE THAT IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS WE HAVE ACCELERATED THE PACE OF THE DISCUSSIONS AND ELEVATED THE LEVEL OF THEM, TOO. IN MY VIEW SODER IS CLOSE TO BEING IN AN UNTENABLE POSITION, HOWEVER. IF WE TURN STANSAAB DOWN (EVEN FOR ALL THE CORRECT REASONS) SHE WILL APPEAR TO HAVE MISHANDLED THE CASE AS FAR AS HER POLITICAL OPPONENTS ARE CONCERNED AND THE FINAL STANSAAB DECISION WILL COINCIDE WITH EMOTIONAL DEBATES OVER THE NEUTRON BOMB AS THE PARLIMENT OPENS. SHE IS A REAL FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES WHO IS IN A TOUGH POSITION BOTH WITHIN HER OWN ADMINISTRATION

AND SUBJECT TO SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ATTACK.

6. PENTAGON PAPERS AND THE HALPRIN CASE: NOT MUCH TO BE DONE ON THIS. THERE WILL BE PROMINENT SWEDISH NAMES RELEASED IN THE REVELATIONS OF THE WASHINGTON TO STOCKHOLM TO HANOI TRIANGLE AND ECHOES OF THE BAD OLD DAYS WILL BE HEARD. BUT IT CAN'T BE HELPED.

7. EVALUATION AND GENERAL COMMENTS: LEIFLAND AND I APPEAR TO BE OFF TO A CANDID, WARM, HEALTHY START. HE INDICATED THAT AMBASSADOR WACHMEISTER HAD BEEN PLEASED BY OUR DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON. THE TRUST-LEVEL SEEMS TO BE HIGH. LEIFLAND ALSO URGED ME TO MEET WITH PALME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER PRESENTING MY CONFIDENTIAL

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CREDENTIALS TO THE KING AND I PLAN TO. POLITICAL ANALYSIS AND BACKUP SUPPORT WITHIN OUR EMBASSY IS EXCELLENT. JACK PERRY IS HELD IN THE HIGHEST REGARD BY EVERY SINGLE SWEDISH PERSON TO WHOM I HAVE TALKED. THEY TRUST HIM.

8. TO THOSE WHO TAKE SWEDEN LIGHTLY BECAUSE SHE IS NOT A SUPERPOWER OR BECAUSE BILATERAL RELATIONS CURRENTLY ARE GOOD, IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT TO MANY OF THE LDC'S SHE HAS A CREDITABILITY THAT WE STILL LACK. WE NEED HER SUPPORT SO I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD BE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE GOS AND SWEDISH PUBLIC OPINION ON SUCH AN ISSUE OF THE NEUTRON BOMB.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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